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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP  
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

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COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

SUBJECT Communist Control of Organized Athletics

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SUPPLEMENT

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1. After the Russians captured Berlin in 1945 and helped German Communists to infiltrate the city government, the Athletic Commission (Hauptsportamt) and the district sports offices (Bezirksämtern) were taken over by Communists or fellow-travellers. Thus, when the people of Berlin began to renew their interest in athletics in the summer of 1945, they found an administration already organized to supervise their recreation. Their elation over the dissolution of the authoritarian Nazi Reichsbund für Leibesübungen (gymnastics) dwindled as they witnessed the Berlin Hauptsportamt gradually introducing all the elements of the tightly-organized, state-supervised Soviet sports union.
2. The principal opponents of the new Athletic Commission were the Berlin football clubs, whose repeated applications to the SMA for permission to regulate their own activities were continually blocked by Müller, head of the authoritarian Hauptsportamt. This official persisted in spreading the fiction, both at conferences and in the Russian-controlled press, that the measures of the Athletic Commission had the official approval of the Allied Control Council. It soon became known to the rank-and-file sports enthusiasts, however, that the organizational measures of the Athletic Commission were taken at the initiative of the SED and were in no way binding in a legal sense.
3. While the opposition to SED control grew more and more vocal among Berlin athletes, sports activities in the rest of the Russian Zone were tightly knit into the Communist organization. When a murmur of protest arose from Leipzig, all athletic contests were prohibited in the city for one month. International rule books were scrapped and games had to be played according to Russian regulations.
4. At the beginning of 1947 the district sport leaders from the entire Russian Zone met in Berlin to coordinate activities and draw up some sort of a program. The Berlin representative, Priefert, suggested at this conference that current internationally-accepted rules for games and contests be adopted so that Germany might once more engage in sports with other European countries. Riedel, the representative from Saxony, however, insisted that the rules of the Arbeitersportverband — the Russian rules — be adopted. When Priefert left to attend a quadri-zonal football association conference in western Germany as the delegate from the Russian Zone, the Saxony Athletic Office, in its capacity as the main authority for sports activities in eastern Germany, withdrew

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from Priefert the right to make commitments for his zone.

5. The demands of the independent athletic groups in Berlin for permission to regulate their own activities were continually rejected by the Berlin city government until the Allied Control Council stepped in to grant their requests in Communiqué No. 63 of 18 March 1947. The SED immediately held a conference of the twenty Berlin district athletic commissioners (Sportamtsleiter) at the Hauptsportamt and the emergency was met by the organization of a new People's Sports Association for Greater Berlin (Volkssportverband Gross-Berlin). The two non-SED commissioners were unable to block this move. Although the Allied Control Council has not yet designated any official athletic organizations, this SED association is now striving to mould Berlin athletics along lines laid down for the rest of the Soviet Zone. All independent athletic groups in the Russian sector of Berlin are automatically considered members of the Communist Volkssportverband. Those groups which refuse to join the Verband are denied permission to organize and hold public contests.

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